

After study comes the play

When the end of semester pub-crawl turns into a weekly binge you know you've got a few issues. But as DAREN POPE discovers, fun times and social activities enhance the study experience.

So you've spent all of first semester with your head in the books, rushing from lectures to part time work, and back home again. Stop right now. All is not lost. With second semester upon us, now is the opportunity to break out of the cocoon.

Get out there and get involved. Join a club, kick up your heels, book a ticket on the next off campus trip, and give a complete stranger in the cafeteria a great big kiss. Well, maybe the kiss is taking it a little too far but the verdict is definitely in. Unless your indulging in campus interests over and above your study commitments you're denying yourself the complete university experience.

University is not all about lectures, assignments and the obligatory money work. Case in point, Deakin University students have just experienced the delights of the annual Glow Stick party. The brainchild of DUFF (Deakin Uni Froth Fermenters), numbers at the 2007 Glow Stick fling were up. Organisers expected 1500 patrons, over 1900 turned up. Along with the first semester Traffic Light Party which attracted no less than 3000 patrons, DUFF is not only providing an essential service but also doing so with aplomb.

Amidst this success DUFF president, Sam Russell remains circumspect, insisting the club has merely cracked the party formula and it works every time.

"It's basically cheap drinks, which students like, cheap tickets and good entertainment," he says. "We like to keep our members happy and we like to think that they don't just sign up for one function so every three weeks we put on a few kegs, free for members at Einstein's Bar."

Formed in 1992, DUFF is one of the largest clubs on Deakin University campus. Russell says the club currently boasts 1200 paid up members spanning all study disciplines (law, commerce, sporting, nursing). It's a well-oiled party machine with an established reputation with alcohol suppliers and a good working relationship with the on campus catering company who purchases the drink. And the DUFF success story and reputation extends beyond the university car park. Russell says a lot of nightclubs independently approach DUFF



to host lucrative after parties.

But you've got to wonder how any study gets done with all this partying going on?

"You've got to get a good balance between study and socialising," Russell says. "Our main parties are only once a semester so I guess it doesn't take too much out of the university schedule."

The key word here is 'balance'. It's OK to party but finding that balance between your study commitments and the university bar is the key.

Katherine Yannakis, a student counsellor at Swinburne echoes the importance of finding that balance.

"When students come and see me for counselling I always advise them to block out time for socialising on their timetable because I just see it as such a big part of every university experience," she says. "If you're going to sit and study for 24 hours, you're not going to be doing good study in that time so it's better that you take time out for yourselves to rest and relax but also to socialise with your friends."

Along with the fun factor (and let's not forget that) Yannakis says there are other important reasons to break out of your social shell.

"It's really important to make friends on campus because it helps you with your studies and it helps

you keep connected with the university," she says. "I guess tertiary institutions are just so big, it's really easy to get lost within the system."

Troy Reynolds, President of the FALUSA (Foundation Allowing Liquor Under Appreciation) club of Monash University Berwick campus has personally experienced the benefits of getting involved in campus activities.

"I've met so many great people through FALUSA," Reynolds says. "I'm in third year now but when I was in first year I didn't really know anyone around campus. I just basically came to class and I got my assignments and went home and that was it."

Reynolds says you definitely need to leverage study commitments against a social life, but the sacrifices are worth it.

"I decided I'd try and meet as many people as I could and by the end of second year I got asked if I wanted to be a FALUSA president and help other people," he says.


There are other benefits for being actively involved in university events and activities. Both Troy Reynolds and DUFF president Sam Russell point out the positives of an event management credit on the regime.

All very well, but what are the triggers for a uni social life that is

out of control? If you're missing lectures and classes, falling behind with assignments, lack energy or find it difficult to concentrate, chances are you need to take a look at the balance in your study and social timetable.

Yannakis says visiting your student counselling services can be a good circuit breaker. The Swinburne service offers short term counselling of up to four 50 minute sessions. Campus counselling services also offer information and referral for drug and alcohol related problems.

"There are definitely drug issues not just alcohol," Yannakis says. "That's something that comes up when we see students. Again, it's about balance and doing things sensibly."

The message couldn't be clearer. Go out on campus, join a club, sign up for an activity and get connected. Have fun, party and feel good about it. It's all part of your university experience and finding that satisfying balance between study and play, has proven rewards. 

Big night out at Crown

The popular social group, Public Relations at Deakin Society (PR@D) hit the town recently for their annual bout of gambling at Crown, as LAURA TIMBERLAKE and DAREN HILLIARD explain.

The Society met at Deakin Waurm Ponds before jumping on a bus to head to Melbourne. There was a minor hitch on the trip when a stampede for the toilets clogged up cubicles at a gas station. PR@D booked a meal at The Pub in Crown with Chicken Parmi and a drink. After the meal everyone split up and headed off for some fun. A few people managed to score big on the pokies, winning up to \$150 after putting in \$1. The trip was cut short at 9.30 pm, and everyone got back on the bus to head back to Geelong. This time *Cowboys* were the cause of bursting bladders. The people from the trip were given free entry into Home House nightclub to finish the night. Unfortunately Home House was having a quiet night, and most people moved on to other clubs.

PR@D industry representative, Melissa Hart said the society holds a number of social and industry events each semester. The trip to Crown is done annually. PR@D's latest idea is a Speed Networking night scheduled for August 29. This is a similar concept to speed dating, but minus the dating. PR@D works to help all communications and PR students meet industry representatives and their fellow students. For more information visit www.myspace.com/pradsociety.